

**Written Testimony for the Planning and Development Committee Hearing
of the General Assembly**

March 20, 2019

On

**H.B. No. 7192 An Act Concerning Municipal and Regional
Opportunities and Efficiencies**

Co-Chairs Senator Cassano and Representative McCarthy Vahey, and Members of the Planning and Development Committee:

On behalf of the Capitol Region Council of Governments (CRCOG) representing 38 towns and cities and almost 1 million residents, we want to commend the General Assembly for renewed attention to municipal and regional service improvement.

CRCOG has a long history of voluntary joint municipal efforts to improve effectiveness, efficiency and responsiveness of public services. The attached maps show that the regional purchasing council has 110 of 169 municipalities as members and 47 towns and cities as members of the state-of-the-art online building permitting system. CRCOG has offered a regional Geographic Information System (GIS) to its members for almost 15 years and a Mobile Data Display System (CAPTAIN) for police cruisers for longer than that. Regional work in progress include a regional and statewide HR portal with CCM for salary surveys, job descriptions and documents, an Electronic Document Management System and cybersecurity assessment services.

H.B. 7192 has many provisions and this testimony will focus on several highlights.

Maintain current funding to councils of governments. To continue regional efforts, we request that the current funding for councils of governments be maintained at the current level rather than be cut in half as has been proposed. Current service improvements underway and planned would be hampered with such a dramatic cut.

Strengthen the Advisory Commission on Intergovernmental Relations (ACIR). Having a venue to carefully consider changes to service delivery at the state, regional and local levels can be an important element for long term success of these efforts. Proper vetting of proposals in terms of how they affect communities of different sizes and preferences for example, as well as proposing a workplan for moving forward in regions across the state are very important to avoid false starts and ill-conceived proposals. Regional 911 services, the various phases of the property tax assessment

service as well as decentralization of state services such as DMV are examples that could benefit from a careful ACIR process.

John Filchak, Executive Director of the Northeast Council of Governments and I were members of the Governor's Transition Team for Shared Services. Strengthening the ACIR as a venue to consider new shared services emerged as a leading recommendation from the deliberations of the team. In addition, in separate testimony Mr. Filchak has some specific recommendations on tasks and membership for a strengthened ACIR that are well worth considering.

These comments are brief but capture the top concerns of CRCOG. We would be happy to follow up with any information that the committee might be interested in. Thank you for the opportunity to provide input to this important bill.

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